

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07 INT-05
L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 SS-15
STR-05 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01
FEA-01 /098 W

-----110473 070744Z /17

R 070705Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5339

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, ETRD, IR

SUBJ: REPORTED INCREASE IN SOVIET TRANSIT

CHARGES FOR IRANIAN EXPORTS

1. AP DISPATCH FILED FROM TEHRAN OCTOBER 15 REPORTED THAT SOVIET UNION HAS UNILATERALLY INCREASED ITS TRANSIT CHARGES FOR IRANIAN GOODS PASSING THROUGH USSR TO EUROPE. REPORT SAYS THAT TRANSIT TARIFFS INCREASED FROM DOLLARS U.S. 27.50 PER TON TO 65.70 PER TON. GOI MINISTRY OF COMMERCE OFFICIALS HERE SAID THAT IRAN'S 170,000 TONS OF DRIED FRUIT EXPORTS TO EUROPE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED. REPORT ASSERTED THAT SOVIET ACTION WAS THOUGHT TO BE "IN RETALIATION" FOR INCREASE IN PRICE OF IRANIAN GAS SUPPLIED TO THE USSR.

2. COMMENT: OFFICIALS IN GOI MINISTRY OF COMMERCE REPORT THAT SOVIET UNION HAS DEMANDED INCREASED TRANSIT PAYMENTS FROM IRAN AND THAT SUCH PAYMENTS WILL PROBABLY GO INTO FORCE FOLLOWING EXPIRATION OF IRAN-USSR TRANSIT AGREEMENT IN OCTOBER 1977. APPARENTLY
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SOVIET UNION HAS MULTIPLE TRANSIT CHARGES WITH DIFFERENT RATES FOR DIFFERENT GOODS. ACCORDING TO MINISTRY OFFICIALS, MAJORITY OF IRANIAN EXPORTS FALL IN THOSE CATEGORIES WHICH PAY HIGHER RATES.

3. USSR WOULD PROBABLY DENY THAT THERE IS CONNECTION BETWEEN INCREASED SOVIET TRANSIT TARIFF

AND LIKELIHOOD OF PRICE INCREASE IN IRANIAN GAS
SUPPLIED TO THE USSR. ALTHOUGH IRAN IS SEEKING A
HIGHER PRICE FOR ITS GAS SHIPMENTS TO USSR, AND
DOUBTLESS WILL GET AN INCREASE, FACT REMAINS THAT
GAS PRICE MUST BE NEGOTIATED WITH SOVIETS. IRAN
SUPPLIES IN EXCESS OF 300 BILLION CUBIC FEET TO
SOVIET UNION ANNUALLY, NOT REPEAT NOT 30 BILLION
REPORTED BY AP DISPATCH.

4. EMBASSY WILL REPORT VIA SEPTTEL AVAILABLE
INFORMATON ON GAS PRICE NEGOTIATIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPORTS, CUSTOMS DUTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TEHRAN09812
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770410-0265
Format: TEL
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771187/aaaacwmf.tel
Line Count: 74
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8b48d51f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 684842
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTED INCREASE IN SOVIET TRANSIT CHARGES FOR IRANIAN EXPORTS
TAGS: ENRG, ETRD, IR, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8b48d51f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009